

## SUBSTANTIAL UNIVERSALS IN ARISTOTLE'S *CATEGORIES*

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ARISTOTLE in the *Categories*, but not elsewhere, presents the distinction between individual substances such as Socrates or Bucephalus and their species and genera as the distinction between *primary* (πρῶται) and *secondary* (δεύτεραι) substances (2<sup>a</sup>11–19).<sup>1</sup> The distinction between primary and secondary substances, in turn, is a distinction between substances that are *particulars* and substances that are *universals*. In chapter 7 of *De interpretatione* Aristotle tells us:

I call universal [καθόλου] that which is by its nature predicated of a plurality of things [ὃ ἐπὶ πλείονων πέφυκε κατηγορεῖσθαι], and particular [καθ' ἑκάστον] that which is not; human being, for instance, is a universal, Callias a particular [οἷον ἄνθρωπος μὲν τῶν καθόλου Καλλίας δὲ τῶν καθ' ἑκάστον]. (17<sup>a</sup>38–<sup>b</sup>1)

In the *Categories* Aristotle defines a primary substance as that which is neither SAID OF NOR IN a subject (2<sup>a</sup>11–13). Being SAID OF a subject and being IN a subject are the only relations of *metaphysical* predication Aristotle recognizes in the *Categories*—they are the only ways in which one being or entity (τὸ ὄν) can be predicated of another being or entity as its subject.<sup>2</sup> If a primary substance is neither

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<sup>1</sup> I am assuming that Aristotle's δεύτεραι οὐσίαι λέγονται means 'are called "secondary substances"'. As S. Menn, 'Metaphysics, Dialectic, and the *Categories*', *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, 100 (1995), 311–37 at 324 n. 23, notes, the only alternative is to treat δεύτεραι 'quasi-adverbially' and take δεύτεραι οὐσίαι λέγονται and its parallels to mean 'are, in a secondary way, called "substances"' (as e.g. M. V. Wedin, *Aristotle's Theory of Substance: The Categories and Metaphysics Zeta* [*Aristotle's Theory of Substance*] (Oxford, 2000), 96–7, does). But, as Menn points out, Aristotle does in fact call the species and genera of primary substances δεύτεραι οὐσίαι (e.g. at 2<sup>b</sup>7).

<sup>2</sup> I follow F. Lewis, *Substance and Predication in Aristotle* [*Substance*] (Cambridge,

SAID OF nor IN a subject, then a primary substance is not predicated of anything. *A fortiori* it is not predicated of a plurality of things. Therefore, according to the definitions of ‘universal’ and ‘particular’ Aristotle gives in *De interpretatione*, a primary substance is not a universal but a particular. In the *Categories* a secondary substance is the species or genus of a primary substance (2<sup>a</sup>14–19). The species human being, for instance, is SAID OF, and so predicated of, all individual human beings (Socrates, Callias, Coriscus, etc.). The genus animal is SAID OF, and so predicated of, its species (human being, horse, dog, etc.) as well as all individual animals (Socrates, Bucephalus the horse, Fido the dog, etc.). Since a secondary substance is predicated of more than one being or entity as its subject, it is not a particular but a universal.<sup>3</sup> The question I want to try to

1991), and W. R. Mann, *The Discovery of Things: Aristotle's Categories and their Context [Discovery]* (Princeton, 2000), in capitalizing the names of the predication relations introduced in chapter 2 of the *Categories* in order to indicate that these names are technical terms. For the relations being SAID OF and being IN a subject as relations of metaphysical (or, as it is sometimes called, ontological) rather than linguistic predication, see especially J. L. Ackrill, *Aristotle's Categories and De interpretatione [Aristotle's Categories]* (Oxford, 1963), 75–6; A. Code, ‘On the Origins of Some Aristotelian Theses about Predication’ [‘Origins’], in J. Bogen and J. McGuire (eds.), *How Things Are* (Dordrecht, 1985), 101–31 at 103–4; id., ‘Aristotle: Essence and Accident’ [‘Essence’], in R. Grandy and R. Warner (eds.), *Philosophical Grounds of Rationality: Intentions, Categories, and Ends* (Oxford, 1986), 411–39 at 414–23; and Lewis, *Substance*, 4 n. 4 and 54–6. The use of ‘metaphysical predication’ for the genus of which the relations being SAID OF and being IN are the species is *my* usage (and the usage of other commentators on the *Categories*). However, this usage reflects the way in which Aristotle sometimes, though not always or even usually, uses *κατηγορεῖσθαι* in the *Categories*. Aristotle often uses *κατηγορεῖσθαι* as a variant of *λέγεσθαι* in its technical sense as denoting the SAID OF relation: 1<sup>b</sup>10–15, 2<sup>a</sup>37, 2<sup>b</sup>15, 3<sup>a</sup>3–<sup>b</sup>4, and possibly 1<sup>b</sup>22. He no less often uses *κατηγορεῖσθαι* to denote the relation of *linguistic* predication, i.e. the relation which a linguistic item (a name (*ὄνομα*) or account (*λόγος*)) bears to a non-linguistic item: 2<sup>b</sup>22–5, 2<sup>b</sup>28–30, 3<sup>a</sup>16–20. But on at least two occasions he uses *κατηγορεῖσθαι* to denote the genus of which the relations being SAID OF and being IN are the species. At 2<sup>b</sup>31 he says that ‘of the things predicated’ (*τῶν κατηγορουμένων*) of a primary substance, only secondary substances reveal that primary substance. Here, as Aristotle indicates at 2<sup>b</sup>35–6, the things that are *κατηγορεῖται* of a primary substance include non-substantial items, e.g. paleness or running. But non-substantial items are IN a primary substance. So here *κατηγορεῖσθαι* is used in a way that includes the being IN relation. At 3<sup>a</sup>4 *κατηγορεῖσθαι* denotes the relation in which, on the one hand, both secondary substances and all non-substantial items stand to primary substances, and, on the other hand, all non-substantial items stand to secondary substances. That relation can only be the relation—metaphysical predication—of which being SAID OF and being IN are the species.

<sup>3</sup> This point is made explicitly by Aristotle at 3<sup>b</sup>17–18: secondary substances such as the species human being and the genus animal are ‘said of many things’ (*κατὰ*

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answer here is why, according to Aristotle in the *Categories*, certain universals such as the species human being or the genus animal are *substances*.

Aristotle appears to answer this question in the following passage (2<sup>b</sup>29–37):

It is reasonable [εἰκότως] that, after primary substances, their species and genera should be the only other things called secondary substances [δεύτεραι οὐσίαι]. For only they, of things predicated, reveal the primary substance [μόνα γὰρ δηλοῖ τὴν πρώτην οὐσίαν τῶν κατηγορουμένων]. For if someone is to say of the individual human being [τὸν τινα ἄνθρωπον] what he is [τί ἐστίν], it will be proper to give the species or the genus [τὸ μὲν εἶδος ἢ τὸ γένος ἀποδιδοὺς οἰκείως ἀποδώσει] (and more informative to give ‘human being’ than ‘animal’). But to give any of the other things will be improper [ἀλλοτρίως], for example to give ‘pale’ or ‘runs’ or anything like that. So it is reasonable that these should be the only other things called substances.<sup>4</sup>

According to Aristotle here something is a substance, albeit a secondary one, if it ‘reveals’ or ‘discloses’ (δηλοῖ) a primary substance. Call this *the disclosure condition for secondary substance*. Something ‘reveals’ or ‘discloses’ a primary substance if and only if mention of that thing constitutes a correct answer to the question ‘What is it?’ (τί ἐστίν;) asked about that primary substance. Aristotle in this passage claims that *only* the species and genera of primary substances satisfy the disclosure condition for secondary substance, but he fails to explain why this is so. Suppose I ask about some primary substance, e.g. Socrates, ‘What is it?’ Strictly speaking this question is *not* a request for a definition of Socrates. For on Aristotle’s view in the *Categories*, and throughout the *Organon*, the objects of definition—that is, those beings or entities that are definable—are universals, not particulars, and Socrates is a particular.<sup>5</sup> None the less, Socrates or any other particular is something essentially, and in asking the question ‘What is it?’ about Socrates I am asking what Socrates is essentially. So a being or entity will be mentioned in a

πολλῶν . . . λέγεται). Cf. *Pr. An.* 1. 27, 43<sup>a</sup>25–42; *Metaph. Z* 13, 1038<sup>b</sup>11–12; and T. H. Irwin, *Aristotle's First Principles* (Oxford, 1988), 56 and 503 n. 22.

<sup>4</sup> Translations from the *Categories* draw on those by Ackrill in Ackrill, *Aristotle's Categories*, and S. M. Cohen and G. B. Matthews in S. M. Cohen, P. Curd, and C. D. C. Reeve (eds.), *Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy: From Thales to Aristotle*, 3rd edn. (Indianapolis, 2005), 656–62.

<sup>5</sup> For this point see especially Code, ‘Origins’, 112–13.

correct answer to this question, and so will satisfy the disclosure condition for secondary substance, only if that being or entity is something that Socrates is essentially.

Now let lower-case letters ( $x$ ,  $y$ ) be beings or entities, i.e. non-linguistic items, and let upper-case letters ( $X$ ,  $Y$ ,  $L$ ) be linguistic items. So let  $X$  be the name of  $x$ ,  $Y$  be the name of  $y$ , and  $L$  be the account of  $y$ .<sup>6</sup> In the *Categories* the SAID OF relation is the relation of essential predication: if  $y$  is SAID OF  $x$ , then  $y$  is something  $x$  is essentially.<sup>7</sup> Aristotle claims by implication that this is so when he claims that ‘if something is said of a subject [τῶν καθ’ ὑποκειμένου λεγομένων] both its name [τοῦ ὄνομα] and its account [τὸν λόγον] are necessarily predicated of the subject [κατηγορεῖσθαι τοῦ ὑποκειμένου]’ (2<sup>a</sup>19–21). According to Aristotle here, if  $y$  is SAID OF, and so *metaphysically* predicated of,  $x$ , then both the *name* of  $y$  ( $= Y$ ) and the *account* of  $y$  ( $= L$ ) are *linguistically* predicated of  $x$ . Linguistic predication is a relation between a linguistic item—a name or an account—and a being or entity.<sup>8</sup> The name  $Y$  is linguistically predicable of  $x$  if and only if the sentence

(1)  $X$  is  $Y$

is true; and the account  $L$  is linguistically predicable of  $x$  if and only if the sentence

(2)  $X$  is  $L$

is true. Aristotle’s claim at 2<sup>a</sup>19–21 is that if  $y$  is SAID OF  $x$ , then (1) and (2) are true, and consequently the name  $Y$  and the account  $L$  are linguistically predicable of  $x$ .

What follows from the fact that the account of  $y$  is linguistically predicable of  $x$ ? The account of  $y$  is a *complete* answer to the question ‘What is it?’ asked about  $y$ . The question ‘What is it?’ is a request for a description of what it is to be  $y$  or, equivalently, of the essence of  $y$ . This description has the form of a list of *all* of the beings or entities that are *essentially* predicated of  $y$ . If the account of  $y$  is linguistically predicable of  $x$ , then all of the beings or entities that are essentially predicated of  $y$  are essentially predicated of  $x$ . According to Aristotle, then, if  $y$  is SAID OF  $x$ , everything that is

<sup>6</sup> I borrow this useful notation from Mann, *Discovery*, 42.

<sup>7</sup> See Code, ‘Origins’, 103–4, and ‘Essence’, 429–31.

<sup>8</sup> On the distinction between metaphysical and linguistic predication, see Code, ‘Origins’, 111–12, and ‘Essence’, 422–3; Lewis, *Substance*, 4.

essentially predicated of  $y$  is essentially predicated of  $x$ : what it is to be  $y$  (=the essence of  $y$ ) is, or at least is part of, what it is to be  $x$  (=the essence of  $x$ ). That is why the account that answers the question 'What is it?' asked about  $y$  (=L) is linguistically predicable of  $x$ , and so is the answer, or at least part of the answer, to the question 'What is it?' asked about  $x$ .<sup>9</sup> If this is so, then the SAID OF relation is the relation of essential predication. (The qualifications here are required because it does not follow from the fact that everything essentially predicated of  $y$  is essentially predicated of  $x$  that everything essentially predicated of  $x$  is essentially predicated of  $y$ , i.e. that the essence of  $y$  exhausts the essence of  $x$ . For Aristotle this is sometimes the case: if  $y$  is an *infima* species (e.g. the species human being) and  $x$  is a member of the species (e.g. Socrates), then the essence of  $y$  just is, and so exhausts, the essence of  $x$ . That is why, as Aristotle indicates in the *Topics*, the account of what the species human being is—i.e. the definition of the species—is the same as the account of what Socrates or any other human being is.<sup>10</sup> But if  $x$  is a species (e.g. human being) and  $y$  is a genus to which that species belongs (e.g. animal), then the essence of  $y$  is part, but only part, of the essence of  $x$ .)

Both the species and the genus of a primary substance are SAID OF that primary substance. Since the SAID OF relation is the relation of essential predication, its species and genus are each something a primary substance is essentially. If this is so, then the question 'What is it?' asked about a primary substance can be answered correctly by mentioning the species or genus of that primary substance. Both the species and the genus of a primary substance, therefore, satisfy the disclosure condition for secondary substance.

In this context, as in others, Aristotle's treatment in the *Categories* of differentiae is problematic.<sup>11</sup> For, on the one hand, dif-

<sup>9</sup> Cf. the remarks on 2<sup>a</sup>19–21 in M. Furth, *Substance, Form, and Psyche: An Aristotelian Metaphysics* [*Substance, Form, and Psyche*] (Cambridge, 1988), 23.

<sup>10</sup> *Top.* 6. 1, 139<sup>a</sup>26–7: 'the definition of human being must be true of every human being' (δέι γὰρ τὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὄρισμόν κατὰ παντὸς ἀνθρώπου ἀληθεύεσθαι). See also *Top.* 7. 4, 154<sup>a</sup>17–18, where Aristotle says that a species is a synonym (*συνώνυμον*) of its members. The definition of the species human being is not the same as the definition of Socrates—for, according to Aristotle, there is no definition of Socrates or of any other particular. But since the species human being is the essence of Socrates, the definition of that species will be an account of what Socrates is essentially. For this point see especially Code, 'Origins', 112–13.

<sup>11</sup> On the problems with the status of differentia in the *Categories*, see Ackrill, *Aristotle's Categories*, 85–7; H. Granger, 'Aristotle on Genus and Differentia' [*Aris-*

ferentiae are *not* secondary substances—that is the clear implication of Aristotle’s remark at 3<sup>a</sup>21–2, and it is no less clearly implied by Aristotle’s claim at 2<sup>b</sup>36–7 that the species and genera of primary substances are the *only* secondary substances. Yet, on the other hand, a differentia is SAID OF, not IN, the primary substance of which it is predicated, and so it is something that primary substance is essentially. Since this is so, it appears that the question ‘What is it?’ asked about a primary substance can be answered correctly by mentioning a differentia predicated of that primary substance and, therefore, that differentiae satisfy the disclosure condition for secondary substance.<sup>12</sup> Now according to Aristotle in the *Categories*, and elsewhere, a differentia occurs in only one genus.<sup>13</sup> For this reason it is not possible to mention a differentia without thereby referring to the genus in which that differentia occurs. So an answer to the ‘What is it?’ question that mentions a differentia also refers to, even if it does not mention, the genus in which that differentia occurs. Since the combination of a genus and differentia is a species, any answer to the question ‘What is it?’ that mentions only a differentia, but thereby refers to the genus in which that differentia occurs, is equivalent to an answer that mentions a species. So Aristotle’s view in the *Categories* might be that while the question ‘What is it?’ asked about a primary substance can be answered correctly by mentioning a differentia predicated of that primary substance, strictly speaking it is not that differentia but the species which it in part constitutes that satisfies the disclosure condition for secondary substance.<sup>14</sup>

If we bracket the problems raised by Aristotle’s treatment of differentiae, then in the *Categories* the species and genera of primary substances satisfy the disclosure condition for secondary substance, and they are the *only* things that do so. For, first, the question ‘What

tote’], *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 22 (1984), 1–24 at 9–11; and Mann, *Discovery*, 194–5.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Top.* 7. 3, 153<sup>a</sup>17–18, and 7. 5, 154<sup>a</sup>27–8, where Aristotle claims that both the genus and the differentia are predicated in the what-it-is (*ἐν τῷ τί ἐστὶ . . . κατηγοροῦνται*). For a discussion of these and other passages in the *Topics* where Aristotle assimilates differentiae to genera, see Granger, ‘Aristotle’, 7–9.

<sup>13</sup> *Cat.* 1<sup>b</sup>16–17; *Top.* 1. 15, 107<sup>b</sup>19–20; 6. 6, 144<sup>b</sup>12–13. See also the comments in Ackrill, *Aristotle’s Categories*, 76–7.

<sup>14</sup> See Irwin, *Aristotle’s First Principles*, 64–5, for a similar point made in the context of arguing that Aristotle has good reasons in the *Categories* for taking differentiae to be secondary substances.

is it?' asked about a primary substance is not answered correctly simply by giving the proper name of that primary substance.<sup>15</sup> (Suppose, for example, that someone pointing at a horse asks 'What is it?' and I answer 'Bucephalus'.) The proper name of a primary substance denotes a primary substance and not a *predicable*—a being or entity that is predicated of another being or entity as its subject. *A fortiori*, the proper name of a primary substance does not denote anything that is essentially predicated of that primary substance. If this is so, then in giving the proper name of a primary substance I do not thereby mention something that primary substance is essentially. Second, according to Aristotle any answer to the question 'What is it?' asked about Socrates that mentions a predicable other than Socrates' species or genus—for instance, a quality of Socrates such as his paleness or something Socrates is doing, e.g. running—will be incorrect. For it mentions something Socrates happens to be rather than something Socrates is essentially: Socrates can cease to be pale or to be running without ceasing to be Socrates.

So, to sum up this part of the discussion, Aristotle claims that the only things that satisfy the disclosure condition for secondary substance are the species and genera of primary substances. He also claims that the species and genera of primary substances are the only secondary substances. It follows that according to Aristotle satisfaction of the disclosure condition is not only sufficient, but also necessary, for something to be a secondary substance. So the fact that in the *Categories* some universals but not others are substances, albeit secondary ones, is to be explained by the fact that some universals but not others satisfy the disclosure condition for secondary substance.<sup>16</sup>

I want to suggest, however, that in the *Categories* the status of the species and genera of primary substances as themselves substances is a more complicated matter. For why, we might ask, does something qualify as a substance, albeit a secondary one, in virtue of satisfying the disclosure condition? What is the connection between, on the one hand, being something that can be mentioned as a correct answer to the question 'What is it?' asked about a pri-

<sup>15</sup> Thanks to David Sedley for bringing this possibility to my attention.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Wedin, *Aristotle's Theory of Substance*, 94.

mary substance and, on the other hand, being a *substance*, albeit a secondary one?

In the absence of any connection of this sort it might appear as though for Aristotle in the *Categories* there is not one but two ways in which something can be a substance. For any primary substance  $x$ , there is some species  $\epsilon$  and some genus  $\gamma$  such that  $x$  belongs to  $\epsilon$  and  $\gamma$ . In virtue of belonging to  $\epsilon$  and  $\gamma$ ,  $x$  is not just a particular but a particular such-and-such, e.g. a particular human being or horse or animal. The species and genus of a primary substance are each something that primary substance is essentially: a human being is something Socrates is essentially, an animal is something Bucephalus the horse is essentially, etc. That is why the species and genus of a primary substance—and, again bracketing the problems raised by differentiae, only these—satisfy the disclosure condition for secondary substance. So for Aristotle in the *Categories* something can be a substance *either* by being a primary substance like Socrates *or* by being what a primary substance is essentially, that is, by being the being or substance (*οὐσία*) of a primary substance.<sup>17</sup>

On this line of thought the term ‘substance’ (*οὐσία*) applies both to Socrates and to his species or genus. But the account of what it is to be a substance that is true of Socrates is different from the account of what it is to be a substance that is true of his species or genus.<sup>18</sup> For what it is for Socrates’ species or genus to be a substance is for it to be what something else—Socrates and his ilk—is essentially, and that is *not* what it is for Socrates to be a substance. So Socrates and his genus or species are homonyms (*ὁμώνυμα*) with respect to the term or name (*ὄνομα*) ‘substance’, and ‘substance’ has one meaning when it is applied to Socrates and a different meaning when it is applied to his species or genus. This, however, cannot be Aristotle’s view in the *Categories*. For there he claims that primary substances such as Socrates or Bucephalus are substances ‘most of all’ (*μάλιστα*, 2<sup>a</sup>11–12, 2<sup>b</sup>17). Now the claim that  $x$  is an  $F$  ‘most of all’ is, or at least implies, the claim that there

<sup>17</sup> If I have understood it correctly, something like this is the view in G. B. Matthews and S. M. Cohen, ‘The One and the Many’, *Review of Metaphysics*, 21 (1968), 630–55 at 632, who write: ‘Every individual is an individual such-and-such. And so the such-and-such of an individual is also the being or substance (*οὐσία*) of the individual: it is what the individual is.’

<sup>18</sup> My use of the awkward locution ‘the account of what it is to be’ is meant to render Aristotle’s phrase *λόγος τῆς οὐσίας* in the definitions of homonymy and synonymy he gives at 1<sup>a</sup>1–12.

is something else  $y$  such that  $y$  is an  $F$  and  $x$  is an  $F$  more than  $y$ . And for Aristotle in the *Categories*  $x$  is an  $F$  more than  $y$  only if  $x$  and  $y$  are  $F$ s in precisely the same sense, that is, only if the term or name ' $F$ ' has the same meaning when it is applied to  $x$  as it has when it is applied to  $y$ .<sup>19</sup> If Socrates is a substance more than his species or genus, however, then the term 'substance' has the same meaning when it is applied to Socrates as it has when it is applied to his species or genus. And if that is so, then the account of what it is for Socrates to be a substance is the same as the account of what it is for his species or genus to be a substance.

We are still left, then, with the question why something qualifies as a substance, albeit a secondary one, in virtue of satisfying the disclosure condition. The answer to this question, I claim, comes in two parts. First, for Aristotle in the *Categories* the *general* notion of a substance is the notion of a *subject for inherence*. Inherence, or being IN a subject, is one of the two relations of metaphysical predication Aristotle introduces in chapter 2 of the *Categories*. A substance, primary or secondary, is something which other things inhere in or are IN. Second, a universal is a subject for inherence, and hence a substance, if and only if it satisfies the disclosure condition for secondary substance. So, on the view I shall now sketch, in the *Categories* certain universals but not others are substances because certain universals but not others are subjects for inherence.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> For this point see G. E. L. Owen, 'Logic and Metaphysics in Some Earlier Works of Aristotle', in id., *Logic, Science, and Dialectic: Collected Papers in Greek Philosophy* (Ithaca, NY, 1986), 180–99 at 195, who cites *Cat.* 11<sup>a</sup>12–13 and *Phys.* 7. 4, 249<sup>a</sup>3–8. At *Cat.* 3<sup>b</sup>33–4<sup>a</sup>2 Aristotle claims that for any two substances that are specimens of the same species or genus, one substance cannot be more or less a specimen of that species or genus—more or less a human being or horse or animal—than the other substance. But that claim is compatible with the claim that a being or entity of one kind (Socrates) is a substance more than a being or entity of another kind (his species or genus).

<sup>20</sup> The view I defend here is, I think, similar to the one expressed by the remark in M. Frede, 'Individuals in Aristotle' ['Individuals'], in id., *Essays in Ancient Philosophy* (Minneapolis, 1987), 49–71 at 59, that 'Just as the individual objects are the subjects underlying all properties, so too the species and genera underlie all properties as subjects. Since this is what makes substances, species and genera also deserve to be called substances.' To say that the species and genera underlie all properties as subjects is just to say that all properties (except differentiae) inhere in or are IN the species and genera. Frede does not, however, discuss what I call the disclosure condition for secondary substance, and he does not discuss whether or how the species and genera of primary substances 'underlie all properties as subjects' in virtue of satisfying the disclosure condition. The view I defend here is also similar to one suggested by remarks in Lewis, *Substance*, 64, and Furth, *Substance, Form, and Psyche*, 28–9.

In the *Categories* something is a *primary* substance in virtue of being an *ultimate* subject of predication.<sup>21</sup> An *ultimate* subject of predication is something of which other things are predicated while it itself is not predicated of anything. According to Aristotle ‘it is because the primary substances are subjects for all other things and all other things are predicated of them or are in them, that they are called substances most of all’ (2<sup>b</sup>15–17; see also 2<sup>b</sup>37–3<sup>a</sup>1).<sup>22</sup> If something is not a primary substance, then it is a predicable, that is, a being or entity that is predicated of another being or entity as its subject. Aristotle’s view in the *Categories* is that any predicable—any secondary substance, any non-substantial item—is predicated of a primary substance. Since in the *Categories* there are only two relations of metaphysical predication, being SAID OF a subject and being IN a subject, Aristotle’s view is that any predicable is either SAID OF or IN a primary substance. And since a primary substance is not itself a predicable, it is not predicated of any other being or entity as its subject. In this way primary substances are *subjects* for *all* other things, and Aristotle’s claim is that this is the reason why primary substances are substances in the *primary* sense.

However, primary substances are not the *only* subjects of predication in the *Categories*. Non-substantial items are subjects for the SAID OF relation, and therefore are subjects of predication, because they have essences.<sup>23</sup> If a non-substantial item *x* has an essence, then there is some predicable *y* such that *y* is SAID OF, and so predicated of, *x*. White, for instance, is essentially a colour, colour is SAID OF white, and so white is a subject of predication. Secondary substances, too, are subjects for the SAID OF relation, and therefore are subjects of predication. For both the genus and the differentia of a species are SAID OF, and so predicated of, that species. But secondary substances, like primary substances and unlike non-

<sup>21</sup> For this point see Code, ‘Essence’, 431, and M. Frede, ‘Substance in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*’, in id., *Essays in Ancient Philosophy*, 72–80 at 73. Being an ultimate subject of predication is one of the two principal senses of ‘substance’ (*οὐσία*) distinguished in *Metaph.* Δ 8. We might ask why the fact that something is an ultimate subject of predication qualifies it as a primary substance. I cannot pursue that question here, but for one answer to it see Lewis, *Substance*, 67–73.

<sup>22</sup> 2<sup>b</sup>15–17: ἔτι αἱ πρῶται οὐσαὶ διὰ τὸ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἅπασιν ὑποκεῖσθαι καὶ πάντα τὰ ἄλλα κατὰ τούτων κατηγορεῖσθαι ἢ ἐν ταύταις εἶναι διὰ τοῦτο μάλιστα οὐσαὶ λέγονται. Here, as at 1<sup>b</sup>10–15 and elsewhere in the *Categories*, Aristotle uses *κατηγορεῖσθαι* as a variant of *λέγεσθαι* in its technical sense as denoting the SAID OF relation.

<sup>23</sup> For this point see Code, ‘Essence’, 431, who notes that in the *Categories* ‘Substances and non-substances alike are endowed with essential natures.’

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substantial items, are also subjects for inherence or the being IN relation. After claiming that the species and genera of primary substances satisfy what I have called the disclosure condition for secondary substance, Aristotle continues:

Further [ἔτι], it is because the primary substances are subjects for everything else that they are called substances most strictly [κυριώτατα οὐσίαι λέγονται]. But as the primary substances stand to everything else, so the species and genera of primary substances stand to all the rest: all the rest are predicated of these [κατὰ τούτων γὰρ πάντα τὰ λοιπὰ κατηγορεῖται]. For if you will call the individual human being [τὸν τινὰ ἄνθρωπον] grammatical, it follows that you will call both human being and animal grammatical; and similarly in other cases. (2<sup>b</sup>37–3<sup>a</sup>6)

Three points are especially important in connection with this passage. First, Aristotle claims here that every non-substantial item—every quality, quantity, etc.—is predicated not only of a primary substance but also of the species and genus of that primary substance. Now some non-substantial items—differentiae—are SAID OF the species and genera of primary substances (3<sup>a</sup>21–4). But with the exception of differentiae, if a non-substantial item is predicated of a species or genus of a primary substance, then it is IN that species or genus. So if every non-substantial item is predicated not only of a primary substance but also of the species and genus of that primary substance, then the species and genera of primary substances are, like primary substances, subjects for inherence or the being IN relation. Second, and relatedly, a non-substantial item is IN a species or genus if it is IN a primary substance that belongs to that species or genus. So if paleness is IN Socrates—if it is the case that Socrates is pale—then paleness is also IN the species human being and IN the genus animal.<sup>24</sup> All that is required for a species or a genus to be a subject for inherence is that those primary substances that belong to the species or genus are subjects for inherence.

Third, this passage implies something it does not explicitly state: that the species and genera of primary substances are themselves substances, albeit secondary ones, *because* they are subjects of which all non-substantial items are predicated. The context of the passage makes this implication clear. At 2<sup>b</sup>29–30 Aristotle claims that

<sup>24</sup> See Frede, 'Individuals', 61, for the point that any non-substantial item that is IN a subject is IN a plurality of subjects. For if a non-substantial item is IN a subject, it is IN a primary substance; and if a non-substantial item is IN a primary substance, then it is also IN the species and IN the genus of that primary substance.

among the things predicated of a primary substance only their species and genera are secondary substances. He then (2<sup>b</sup>30–7) provides an argument for this claim: among the things predicated of a primary substance, only its species and genus ‘reveal’ or ‘disclose’ that primary substance. And then (2<sup>b</sup>37) our passage begins with the adverb ἔτι, and this adverb indicates that Aristotle is offering a second argument for why the species and genera of primary substances, and only these, are secondary substances.<sup>25</sup> This argument comes in two steps. Aristotle first claims that primary substances are substances in the primary sense in virtue of the asymmetric relation in which they stand to everything else: they are subjects of which everything else is predicated while they are not themselves predicated of anything else. He then claims that the species and genera of primary substances stand in this same asymmetric relation to all non-substantial items: they are subjects of which all non-substantial items are predicated while they themselves are not predicated of any non-substantial item. Just as primary substances are substances in the primary sense because they are subjects for everything else, Aristotle implies, so the species and genera of primary substances are themselves substances, albeit secondary ones, because they are subjects for all non-substantial items.

Now, to repeat a point made earlier, with the exception of differentiae, any non-substantial item predicated of a species or genus of a primary substance is IN that species or genus. So to imply,

<sup>25</sup> See the same use of ἔτι at 2<sup>b</sup>15—introducing a second argument for the claim that the species is a substance more than the genus. Ammonius, in his commentary on the *Categories* (43. 15–44. 4 Busse), notices that at 2<sup>b</sup>37–3<sup>a</sup>6 Aristotle is offering a second argument for the claim that the species and genera of primary substances, and only these, are secondary substances. Wedin, *Aristotle’s Theory of Substance*, 95, misses this point. He writes that the passage at 2<sup>b</sup>37–3<sup>a</sup>6 ‘says neither that species and genera are called *substances* nor that they are substances *secondarily* because of qualifying as subjects . . . It says simply that, as primary substances are subjects, so also, in a certain way, are species and genera subjects. So while [3<sup>a</sup>1–6] offers some kind of contrast between primary substances and their species and genera, it does not contrast the *bases* on which they are *called substances*. This has already been given in [2<sup>b</sup>30–37]. [3<sup>a</sup>1–6] simply records the fact that they are subjects to different kinds of items.’ Wedin reads the passage from 2<sup>b</sup>29 to 3<sup>a</sup>6 in this way because he claims that the adverb ἔτι ‘typically marks a fresh start’ and presumably thinks it does so at 2<sup>b</sup>37. But if at 2<sup>b</sup>37 ἔτι marks a fresh start, that fresh start consists in offering a new argument for the claim made at 2<sup>b</sup>29–30, viz. that the species and genera of primary substances, and only these, are secondary substances. This point is also missed by R. Bodéüs, *Aristote: Catégories* (Paris, 2001), 93, who takes the passage at 2<sup>b</sup>29–3<sup>a</sup>6 to contain two arguments for the thesis that the species and genus of a primary substance are the only things that are essentially predicated of that primary substance.

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as I claim Aristotle does at 2<sup>b</sup>37–3<sup>a</sup>6, that the species and genera of primary substances are themselves substances because they are subjects of which all non-substantial items are predicated is to imply that these species and genera are substances because they are subjects for inherence or the being IN relation. For clearly Aristotle does not imply here that the species and genera of primary substances are themselves substances because they are subjects for the SAID OF relation. For in the *Categories* both substances and non-substantial items are subjects for the SAID OF relation. Since this is so, something cannot be a substance simply in virtue of being a subject for the SAID OF relation. Moreover, in the *Categories* both primary substances *and* their species and genera are subjects for inherence, and they are the *only* subjects for inherence.<sup>26</sup> Being a substance of any sort in the *Categories* is a matter of being a subject for inherence.

It is true, of course, that at 2<sup>b</sup>37–3<sup>a</sup>6 Aristotle does not say that being a subject for inherence or the being IN relation is what makes something a substance. He instead emphasizes there, as I have indicated, that primary and secondary substances share something else, namely, being *ultimate* subjects with respect to *some* domain of items—though not with respect to the same domain of items. For primary substances are ultimate subjects with respect to everything else, while secondary substances are ultimate subjects with respect to all non-substantial items. So it might appear that according to Aristotle at 2<sup>b</sup>37–3<sup>a</sup>6 it is not being a subject for inherence or the being IN relation, but being an *ultimate* subject with respect to some domain of items, that makes something a substance. It seems to me, however, that this appearance is misleading for at least two reasons. First, in the *Categories* something can be an ultimate subject with respect to some domain of items without being a substance. For non-substantial individuals—those things which are IN a subject but are not SAID OF a subject—are ultimate subjects with respect to

<sup>26</sup> For the claim that in the *Categories* if *x* is IN *y*, then *y* is a substance, i.e. for the claim that substances are the only subjects for inherence, see Ackrill, *Aristotle's Categories*, 76, and cf. Furth, *Substance, Form, and Psyche*, 25. At 4<sup>a</sup>15–16 Aristotle denies that 'that same action, one in number, will be bad and good' (*ἡ αὐτῆ πράξις καὶ μία τῶ ἀριθμῶ οὐκ ἔσται φαύλη καὶ σπουδαία*). As D. Devereux, 'Inherence and Primary Substance in Aristotle's *Categories*' ['Inherence'], *Ancient Philosophy*, 12 (1992), 113–31 at 128 n. 24, notes, Aristotle's remark might be taken to imply that certain things, e.g. bravery, can be predicated of an action, and so actions and other non-substantial items can be subjects for inherence.

their species and genera: the latter are predicated of the former, but the former are not predicated of the latter.

Second, and more importantly, it is necessary to distinguish, as it seems to me Aristotle does, what it is that makes something a substance rather than a non-substantial item from what it is that makes a substance more or less a substance. Although something is a substance because it is a subject for inherence or the being IN relation, in the *Categories* some subjects for inherence are substances more than others. So while something's status as a substance is a matter of its being a subject for inherence, something's place in the hierarchy of substances is a function of the predication relations in which it stands to other substances. For any two substances  $x$  and  $y$ , if  $y$  is SAID OF  $x$  and  $x$  is not SAID OF  $y$ , then  $x$  is a substance more than  $y$ . A primary substance is a substance more than its species or genera because they are SAID OF it, but it is not SAID OF them. And, as Aristotle explains at 2<sup>b</sup>15–22, Socrates' species is a substance more than his genus because his genus is SAID OF his species but his species is not SAID OF his genus. (Matters are in fact more complicated, however, since the formula I have given here specifies a sufficient, but not a necessary, condition for one substance being a substance more than another substance. For in the *Categories* there are cases in which both  $x$  and  $y$  are substances,  $x$  is a substance more than  $y$ ,  $x$  is not predicated of (and so not SAID OF)  $y$ , but  $y$  is not predicated of (and so not SAID OF)  $x$ . So, for instance, Bucephalus, a primary substance, is a substance more than the species human being to which he does not belong and which is not predicated of (and so not SAID OF) him. The following formula is required to capture this kind of case: for any two substances  $x$  and  $y$ , if there is some substance  $z$  such that  $y$  is SAID OF  $z$ , and there is no substance  $w$  such that  $x$  is SAID OF  $w$ , then  $x$  is a substance more than  $y$ .) So on my account the fact that primary substances are ultimate subjects for *everything else*—that is, the fact that they are subjects for secondary substances as well as non-substantial items—is relevant not to the status of primary substances as *substances* but to their status as *primary* substances. And, in fact, at 2<sup>b</sup>37–3<sup>a</sup>1 (and cf. 2<sup>b</sup>15–17) Aristotle cites the fact that primary substances are ultimate subjects, and therefore are subjects for both secondary substances and non-substantial items, not as the reason why primary substances are (or are called (λέγονται)) substances but as the reason why they are (or are called) substances

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most strictly (κυριώτατα), i.e. why they are (or are called) *primary* substances.

Two additional points are worth making in this context. First, according to Aristotle in the *Categories* all and only substances are able to receive contraries (τῶν ἐναντίων δεκτικόν).<sup>27</sup> For this reason we might say that for Aristotle something is a substance *because* it is able to receive contraries. But in saying this we are saying no more than that something is a substance because it is a subject for inherence. For to say that  $x$  is able to receive contraries  $F$  and  $G$  is just to say that it is possible for both  $F$  and  $G$  to be IN  $x$  (though not necessarily at the same time.) Second, the claim that in the *Categories* something is a substance because it is a subject for inherence is not to be confused with the claim Aristotle makes at 3<sup>a</sup>7–8 that ‘Not being IN a subject is something common to all substances’ (κοινὸν δὲ κατὰ πάσης οὐσίας τὸ μὴ ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ εἶναι). In making the latter claim Aristotle is *not* making a claim about why something is a substance. For since, as he himself notes, not being IN a subject is a characteristic not only of substances but also of differentiae (3<sup>a</sup>21–2), and since differentiae are not substances, it cannot be his view that something is a substance because it is not IN any subject.<sup>28</sup>

But why, according to Aristotle, are the species and genera of primary substances subjects for inherence? Why is it that, as Aris-

<sup>27</sup> Though I am inclined to think that this is *not* the claim Aristotle makes in claiming at 4<sup>a</sup>10–11 (and 4<sup>a</sup>16–17) that it is (or is thought to be) μάλιστα ἴδιον of substance that, being the same and one in number, it is able to receive contraries (ταῦτὸν καὶ ἐν ἀριθμῷ ὄν τῶν ἐναντίων εἶναι δεκτικόν). The scope of Aristotle’s claim here seems to be restricted to primary substances. For at 4<sup>a</sup>29–30 Aristotle explicates his claim that substances are able to receive contraries by claiming that they do so by themselves changing (αὐτὰ μεταβάλλοντα), and that is the way in which primary, but not secondary, substances are able to receive contraries. So Aristotle’s claim at 4<sup>a</sup>10–11 seems to be that what is distinctive of *primary* substance is that among things that are the same and one in number it alone is able to receive contraries.

<sup>28</sup> So here I disagree with G. B. Matthews, ‘Aristotelian Categories’, in G. Anagnostopoulos (ed.), *A Companion to Aristotle* (forthcoming), who writes that ‘Not being in a subject makes something a substance (*ousia*) . . . Because man and horse are not in any subject, they, too, count as substances, along with Socrates and Bucephalus.’ Note that when in chapter 5 of the *Categories* Aristotle defines secondary substances, he does *not* (as he does in the case of primary substances) do so by reference to the predication relations introduced in chapter 2. In particular, he does not define a secondary substance as what is SAID OF but not IN a subject. (He instead defines secondary substances as the species and genera of primary substances.) The reason for this may be, as Ackrill, *Aristotle's Categories*, 81–2, noted, the fact that for Aristotle in the *Categories* some entities or beings that are SAID OF but not IN a subject—namely, differentiae—are *not* substances.

total claims, if a non-substantial item is IN Socrates, it is also IN the species human being and the genus animal (3<sup>a</sup>1–6)? Aristotle can answer this question only by appealing to the relation in which a species or genus stands to the primary substances that belong to it. It is Aristotle's view in the *Categories* that a primary substance is a subject for inherence, and that the species and genera of a primary substance are themselves subjects for inherence because they are what that primary substance is essentially. But this is just the view that the species and genera of primary substances are subjects for inherence in virtue of satisfying what I have called the disclosure condition for secondary substance: mention of its species or genus constitutes a correct answer to the question 'What is it?' asked about a primary substance. Socrates, for example, is essentially a human being. According to Aristotle, if it is true that

(1) Socrates is pale,

then it is also true, and true in virtue of the fact that Socrates is pale, that

(2) Human being is pale.

For Aristotle (2) is not equivalent to, though it does imply,

(3) A human being is pale.

(3) asserts that paleness is IN some member or other of the species human being. (2), by contrast, asserts that paleness is IN the species human being itself. (2) is true because the species human being is what some primary substance (Socrates) is essentially and paleness is IN that primary substance. To be clear: the view I am attributing to Aristotle in the *Categories* is that the species and genera of primary substances are themselves substances *not* because they are what primary substances are essentially, but because being what primary substances are essentially they, like primary substances, are subjects for inherence. But their status as subjects for inherence is parasitic on the status of primary substances as subjects for inherence. For a species or genus is a subject for inherence only because those primary substances that belong to it are subjects for inherence. Moreover, the various non-substantial items that inhere in a species or genus do so only because those same non-substantial

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items inhere in primary substances that belong to that species or genus.<sup>29</sup>

If any non-substantial item that is IN a primary substance is IN the species and genus of that primary substance as well, then it is possible for contraries (*τὰ ἐναντία*)—incompatible qualities, quantities, or other non-substantial items—to be IN a species or genus at one and the same time. If, for example, at time *t* Socrates is pale and Callias is dark, then at *t* the qualities paleness and darkness are both IN the species human being and the genus animal. But now, it might be argued, it is a condition of something's being a genuine subject for inherence that it is *not* possible for contraries to be IN that thing at one and the same time. Since the species and genera of primary substances fail to satisfy this condition, they are not genuine subjects for inherence.<sup>30</sup> And if this is so, then it is not the case that the species and genera of primary substances are themselves substances in virtue of being subjects for inherence.

This argument, however, is not one Aristotle accepts in the *Categories*. His view there is not

- (A) If *x* is a subject for inherence, then it is not possible for contraries to be IN *x* at one and the same time.

but rather

- (B) If *x* is a subject for inherence that is 'one in number' (*ἐν ἀριθμῷ*), then it is not possible for contraries to be IN *x* at one and the same time.

For Aristotle in the *Categories* the truth of (B) does not entail the truth of (A) because not all subjects for inherence are 'one in number'. Aristotle writes that 'It seems most distinctive of substance that being the same and one in number (*τὰὐτὸν καὶ ἐν ἀριθμῷ*) it is able to receive contraries' (4<sup>a</sup>10–11), and he explains that a substance that is 'one in number' receives contraries by changing (4<sup>a</sup>29–30). So, for instance, someone who is pale at one time becomes (*γίγνεται*) dark at a later time. The clear implication of Aristotle's remarks here is that it is not possible for contraries at one and

<sup>29</sup> On this point—that any case of inherence that has a species or genus as its subject is grounded in a case of inherence that has a primary substance that falls under the species or genus in question as its subject—see Lewis, *Substance*, 64–6.

<sup>30</sup> See Wedin, *Aristotle's Theory of Substance*, 98–100, for this argument.

the same time to be IN a substance that is ‘one in number’. For if that were possible, then, contrary to what Aristotle claims here, it would be possible for a substance that is ‘one in number’ to receive contraries *without* changing. Since Aristotle elsewhere (3<sup>b</sup>10–13) claims that a *primary* substance is ‘one in number’, his view is that it is not possible for contraries to be IN a *primary* substance at one and the same time.

But it is also Aristotle’s view that, unlike primary substances, their species and genera are *not* ‘one in number’. For Aristotle writes that ‘things that are individual and one in number [τὰ ἄτομα καὶ ἐν ἀριθμῷ] are, without exception [ἀπλῶς], not said of any subject [κατ’ οὐδενὸς ὑποκειμένου λέγεται], but nothing prevents them from being in a subject’ (1<sup>b</sup>6–8). So if  $x$  is ‘one in number’, there is no  $y$  such that  $x$  is SAID OF  $y$ .<sup>31</sup> But the species of a primary substance is SAID OF the primary substances that belong to it; and the genus of a primary substance is SAID OF both its species and the primary substances that belong to those species. So, according to Aristotle, neither the genus nor the species of a primary substance is ‘one in number’. If this is so, and given that the species and genera of primary substances are subjects for inherence, then for Aristotle not all subjects for inherence are ‘one in number’.

On Aristotle’s view in the *Categories*, then, the species or genus of a primary substance is *both* a subject for inherence, and for this reason a substance, *and*, being a universal, a predicable predicated of (SAID OF) a plurality of subjects. The non-substantial items that inhere in the species or genus of a primary substance are *all* of those non-substantial items that inhere in the primary substances of which that species or genus is predicated. As a result the species or genus of a primary substance, unlike a primary substance itself, is a subject for inherence in which contraries can inhere at one and the same time. This view obviously invites a question that, as far

<sup>31</sup> This claim seems to be the import of Aristotle’s remarks at 3<sup>b</sup>13–18 as well. For if κατὰ πολλῶν λέγεται at 3<sup>b</sup>17 denotes the SAID OF relation, as it does in chapter 2 of the *Categories*, then according to Aristotle in this passage a necessary condition for something’s being ‘one in number’ is *not* that it is not predicated of a plurality of subjects, i.e. neither IN nor SAID OF a plurality of subjects, but rather that it is not SAID OF a plurality of subjects. If this is right, then *contra* Devereux, ‘Inherence’, 114–16, Aristotle’s remarks at 3<sup>b</sup>10–18 are at least compatible with the view that a non-substantial individual—an item that is IN a subject but not SAID OF any subject—is *both* ‘one in number’, and therefore an individual, *and* predicable of a plurality of subjects in so far as it can be IN a plurality of subjects. Cf. Frede, ‘Individuals’, 53–4.

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as I know, no commentator has yet answered: what kind of being or entity could *this* be?

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